

George Gardner
Washington Post, newsroom
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20071

4/18/91

Dear George,

Your question, why was I so shocked on the Sunday before Garrison began empanelling the Clay Shaw jury, hadn't I read the indictment, has been much on my mind. While I have no recollection of reading the indictment, I must have. And if I didn't I could not have not understood it from all the attention there was to it. Without question, I had to have known. Yet it was not in my mind, and for that there is no excuse. I've been thinking about it to try to understand it. I'm not sure that I do after all this thinking about it.

In part it probably goes back to my first book, when I said that there had been a conspiracy to kill JFK and that Oswald had been part of it. The question was whether he was a witting part and on balance I believed he had not been. While I have no recollection of having given this any thought at the time of Garrison's indictment - and there is no excuse for not having given it any thought then - I am inclined now to believe that I then must have assumed he believed as I did, that Oswald was not a witting part of it.

In part, and again I have no recollection of so thinking, my thinking must have been like what I think George Schultz's probably was when he did not quit ~~p~~ that he could do more good and perhaps prevent more harm by not quitting. If this is true, it had to be late. I am certain of two things: that ~~in~~ I did not begin that way, when I did assume he had a case and followed my other interests when I was in New Orleans; and that there did come a time when I did devote some time and effort to preventing more harm.

If I were to try to date this now it would be the last days of October, 1968, or the first few days of that November, when I learned that he actually did believe in the smirking of the super-rich of which I told you. The time of my suspicions about the man who used the name Jim Rose of which I told you.

Remember the ~~future~~ afternoon we spent with Loran Hall? It was February, 1968 that I spent most of three days with him when he was in the hospital in L.A. He had gone to court and did not have to go to New Orleans. I persuaded him that it was in his interest to go there anyway. He did, by the way, and thereafter was not bothered. If I had had any questions at all then I'd not have talked him into going. (Hall was armed in the hospital, by the way. When he decided that he trusted me he took the pistol or revolver from under the pillow and told me that is what he had had in case he didn't trust me.)

This is not an attempt to justify how long it took me to realize and understand because it took me much too long and that cannot be justified. It is the best effort I can make to explain what was inherent in your question.

Best,

Gardner